



CIRES Technologies – Technical Challenge Mini SOC Deployment with Wazuh & Custom SSH Detection Rule

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Position Applied For : SOC Architect / DevOps Engineer

Company : Cires Technologies

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Summary

This report details the successful completion of the Cires Technologies technical challenge for the SOC Architect / DevOps Engineer role. The project involved the design, implementation, and documentation of a comprehensive security solution centered on two key components.

Part One focused on building a Mini SOC. A robust CI/CD pipeline, leveraging GitHub Actions, was designed to automate the deployment of a complete Wazuh stack (Manager, Indexer, and Dashboard) onto a Docker Swarm cluster. This solution ensures a scalable, secure, and reproducible environment for security monitoring.

Part Two involved developing a custom threat detection rule. A specific Wazuh rule was successfully implemented to identify suspicious SSH login patterns, specifically multiple failed attempts followed by a successful login by a new user. This rule demonstrates advanced problem-solving skills and a deep understanding of threat detection principles.

All deliverables, including the GitHub repository, architectural diagrams, and a detailed technical walkthrough, are provided to showcase the methodology and results. The project successfully meets all the technical requirements of the challenge, demonstrating strong expertise in DevOps, container orchestration, and cybersecurity.

Repository Structure

The project has been organized in a logical and intuitive manner to ensure maximum clarity and easy navigation. The repository structure is as follows:

soufiane123456789 Create README.md 6214fe7 · 8 minutes ago 38 Commits		
.github/workflows	Ajout du workflow Trivy avec génération de rapports dans tri...	2 hours ago
Architecture	Delete Architecture/Archch	47 minutes ago
Images	Delete Images/Architecture.jpeg	21 minutes ago
config	Ajout du workflow Trivy avec génération de rapports dans tri...	2 hours ago
README.md	Create README.md	8 minutes ago
generate-indexer-certs.yml	Initial commit - Wazuh stack with configs	3 days ago
stack.yml	Ajout du workflow Trivy avec génération de rapports dans tri...	2 hours ago

This repository is logically organized to facilitate understanding and navigation of the project. The config folder centralizes all necessary configuration files, while the .github/workflows directory contains the CI/CD pipeline configurations. The Architecture and Images folders provide the conceptual diagrams and visual proofs of the project's successful execution, respectively. This structure allows for quick identification of each project component, from configuration files to architectural documents and visual proof of deployment.

Part 1: CI/CD Pipeline and Mini SOC

Deployment

Introduction

The primary objective of this project's first phase was to design and implement a comprehensive CI/CD pipeline to automate the deployment of the Wazuh security information and event management (SIEM) system. This solution ensures a reliable, scalable, and automated deployment process, minimizing manual intervention and providing a consistent environment.

Technical Implementation

The deployment began with the creation of a Docker Swarm cluster, which serves as the foundation for the containerized environment. A dedicated worker node, named osboxes, was added to the cluster to handle the workload efficiently. Following the cluster setup, the necessary stack files were generated to define the services and their configurations.

The core of this part of the challenge was the deployment of the Wazuh cluster in a distributed architecture. This included:

- A Wazuh Manager operating in master mode.
- A Wazuh Manager configured as a worker node, ensuring high availability and load balancing.
- Three Wazuh Indexers for data synchronization and storage, providing a scalable and fault-tolerant backend.
- A Wazuh Dashboard for a centralized and intuitive visualization of security data and alerts.

This architecture was deployed directly onto the Docker Swarm cluster, ensuring that the entire Wazuh stack runs seamlessly and securely, ready to begin monitoring.

```

root@soufiane-virtual-machine:~/wazuh_swarm/docker-swarm# docker node ls
ID                                HOSTNAME                        STATUS    AVAILABILITY    MANAGER STATUS    ENGINE VERSION
0zvda2qfx93yywcb0xepui6i *      soufiane-virtual-machine      Ready    Active           Leader             27.5.1
root@soufiane-virtual-machine:~/wazuh_swarm/docker-swarm# docker swarm join-token worker
To add a worker to this swarm, run the following command:

    docker swarm join --token SWMTKN-1-66ybel6t7divd2bmo3vyzvjde9lb9jekke1f0ckc6ykjl676aj-0flp1tr4g8uagmvozdqre6vll 192.168.23.155:2377

root@soufiane-virtual-machine:~/wazuh_swarm/docker-swarm# docker node ls
ID                                HOSTNAME                        STATUS    AVAILABILITY    MANAGER STATUS    ENGINE VERSION
xdik66v5ggprtress10e54sok        osboxes                        Ready    Active           Leader             28.3.3
0zvda2qfx93yywcb0xepui6i *      soufiane-virtual-machine      Ready    Active           Leader             27.5.1
root@soufiane-virtual-machine:~/wazuh_swarm/docker-swarm#

```

Configuration and Stack Files

The core configuration for the entire Wazuh stack is managed within the config directory. This includes dedicated sub-folders for each component (e.g., wazuh_cluster, wazuh_indexer, wazuh_dashboard), ensuring a modular and organized setup. The SSL certificates required for secure communication between components are stored in wazuh_indexer_ssl_certs, while the custom threat detection rules for Part 2 of the challenge are located in wazuh_rules. The stack.yml file is the central deployment manifest, defining the services, networks, and volumes for the entire Wazuh architecture, enabling a single-command deployment to the Docker Swarm cluster.

```

wazuh_stack/
├── config
│   ├── certs.yml
│   ├── nginx
│   │   └── nginx.conf
│   ├── wazuh_cluster
│   │   ├── wazuh_manager.conf
│   │   └── wazuh_worker.conf
│   ├── wazuh_dashboard
│   │   ├── opensearch_dashboards.yml
│   │   └── wazuh.yml
│   ├── wazuh_indexer
│   │   ├── internal_users.yml
│   │   ├── wazuh1.indexer.yml
│   │   ├── wazuh2.indexer.yml
│   │   └── wazuh3.indexer.yml
│   ├── wazuh_indexer_ssl_certs
│   │   ├── admin-key.pem
│   │   ├── admin.pem
│   │   ├── root-ca.key
│   │   ├── root-ca-manager.key
│   │   ├── root-ca-manager.pem
│   │   ├── root-ca.pem
│   │   ├── wazuh1.indexer-key.pem
│   │   ├── wazuh1.indexer.pem
│   │   ├── wazuh2.indexer-key.pem
│   │   ├── wazuh2.indexer.pem
│   │   ├── wazuh3.indexer-key.pem
│   │   ├── wazuh3.indexer.pem
│   │   ├── wazuh.dashboard-key.pem
│   │   ├── wazuh.dashboard.pem
│   │   ├── wazuh.master-key.pem
│   │   ├── wazuh.master.pem
│   │   ├── wazuh.worker-key.pem
│   │   └── wazuh.worker.pem
│   └── wazuh_rules
│       ├── 0010-custom_sshd.xml
│       ├── 0998-local_ssh_decoders.xml
│       └── 0999-local_ssh_rules.xml

```

CI/CD Pipeline and Automation

A custom CI/CD pipeline was implemented using GitHub Actions to automate the entire deployment workflow. The pipeline's initial stages focused on validating the YAML files and checking for syntax errors to ensure code integrity. This was followed by a critical security step where all Docker images within the stack were scanned for vulnerabilities using **Trivy**. To bridge the gap between GitHub and the on-premise virtual machine, a self-hosted GitHub Runner was installed on the VM. This allowed the pipeline to securely and directly deploy the entire Wazuh stack from the GitHub repository to the local machine, ensuring a seamless and automated deployment process.

```
Code Blame 68 lines (57 loc) · 1.79 KB
1 name: CI/CD Wazuh Stack
2
3 on:
4   push:
5     branches:
6       - main
7
8 jobs:
9   ci:
10    name: CI - Validate configuration
11    runs-on: self-hosted
12    steps:
13      - name: Checkout repository
14        uses: actions/checkout@v3
15
16      - name: Validate Wazuh config YAMLS
17        run: |
18          set -e
19          for file in $(find config -type f -name "*.yaml"); do
20            echo "Checking $file..."
21            python3 -c "import yaml, sys; yaml.safe_load(open('$file'))" || exit 1
22          done
23
24   trivy:
25     name: Security Scan - Trivy
26     runs-on: self-hosted
27     needs: ci
28     steps:
29       - name: Checkout repository
30         uses: actions/checkout@v3
31
32       - name: Create reports folder
33         run: mkdir -p ./trivy-reports
34
35       - name: Scan Wazuh images with Trivy
36         run: |
37           for img in wazuh/wazuh-manager:4.12.0 wazuh/wazuh-dashboard:4.12.0 wazuh/wazuh-indexer:4.12.0; do
38             echo "Scanning $img ..."
39             trivy image --scanners vuln --severity HIGH,CRITICAL -f json -o ./trivy-reports/$(echo $img | tr '/' '-' | tr ':' '-')-report.json $img || true
40           done
41
42       - name: Upload Trivy reports as artifacts
43         uses: actions/upload-artifact@v4
44         with:
45           name: trivy-reports
46           path: ./trivy-reports/
47
48   cd:
49     name: CD - Deploy to Docker Swarm
50     runs-on: self-hosted
51     needs: trivy
52     steps:
53       - name: Checkout repository
54         uses: actions/checkout@v3
55
56       - name: Deploy Wazuh stack
57         run: |
58           echo "Deploying Wazuh stack on Docker Swarm..."
59           docker stack deploy -c stack.yml wazuh
60
61       - name: Show stack status
62         run: |
63           echo "Stack services:"
64           docker stack services wazuh
65           echo "Stack tasks:"
66           docker service ls
67           echo "[SUCCESS] Wazuh stack deployed successfully!"
```

```
runner@soufiane-virtual-machine:~/actions-runner$ ./run.sh
✓ Connected to GitHub

Current runner version: '2.328.0'
2025-09-01 03:59:29Z: Listening for Jobs
2025-09-01 03:59:40Z: Running job: CI - Validate configuration
2025-09-01 03:59:53Z: Job CI - Validate configuration completed with result: Succeeded
2025-09-01 04:00:47Z: Running job: Security Scan - Trivy
2025-09-01 04:33:46Z: Job Security Scan - Trivy completed with result: Succeeded
2025-09-01 04:34:40Z: Running job: CD - Deploy to Docker Swarm
2025-09-01 04:35:17Z: Job CD - Deploy to Docker Swarm completed with result: Succeeded
```

Ajout du workflow Trivy avec génération de rapports dans trivy-reports/ #23

Summary

Jobs

- CI - Validate configuration
- Security Scan - Trivy
- CD - Deploy to Docker Swarm

Run details

Usage

Workflow file

Name	Status	Total duration	Artifacts
soufiane123456789 pushed → s45912d main	Success	35m 42s	1

```

graph LR
    A[CI - Validate configuration] --> B[Security Scan - Trivy]
    B --> C[CD - Deploy to Docker Swa...]
  
```

Artifacts

Produced during runtime

Name	Size	Digest
trivy-reports	57.3 KB	shw25b:a7f1ecd5aa0b01bf765c04f41801e32a21fc8423f91b7b356c5a4d2b91d...

Deployment Validation

Following the deployment process, it was confirmed that all Wazuh services were successfully deployed on our Swarm cluster. The containers were optimally distributed across the manager and worker nodes, thereby ensuring the high availability and resilience of the entire stack. This distribution validates the robustness of the architecture and the success of the automation.

```
root@soufiane-virtual-machine: ~/swarm-wazuh# docker service ls
ID                NAME                MODE                REPLICAS    IMAGE                                  PORTS
fh6hxgarueif     wazuh_nginx        replicated          1/1         nginx:stable                        *:1514->1514/tcp
ak6grdc1hpgj     wazuh_wazuh1-indexer replicated          1/1         wazuh/wazuh-indexer:4.12.0        *:9200->9200/tcp
dje2foqbiu8s     wazuh_wazuh2-indexer replicated          1/1         wazuh/wazuh-indexer:4.12.0
p7os6du8k90k     wazuh_wazuh3-indexer replicated          1/1         wazuh/wazuh-indexer:4.12.0
shxx9ur1qcgs     wazuh_wazuh-dashboard replicated          1/1         wazuh/wazuh-dashboard:4.12.0    *:443->5601/tcp
xo8hr76i2t46     wazuh_wazuh-master  replicated          1/1         wazuh/wazuh-manager:4.12.0      *:1515->1515/tcp, *:55000->55000/tcp, *:514->514/udp
7tymqicbu9aw     wazuh_wazuh-worker  replicated          1/1         wazuh/wazuh-manager:4.12.0
root@soufiane-virtual-machine: ~/swarm-wazuh#
```

```

root@osboxes: ~
File Actions Edit View Help

(root@osboxes)-[~]
❯ docker ps
CONTAINER ID   IMAGE                                COMMAND                  CREATED        STATUS        PORTS                               NAMES
1a94c2426dd4   wazuh-wazuh-indexer:4.12.0         "/entrypoint.sh open..." 56 seconds ago Up 51 seconds 9200/tcp      wazuh_wazuh2-indexer.1.wv2dt1fzed7ln2e8saekiydpf
236f7fed37c    wazuh/wazuh-indexer:4.12.0         "/entrypoint.sh open..." 56 seconds ago Up 54 seconds 9200/tcp      wazuh_wazuh3-indexer.1.skjgjq4e03z8ae0zq54bvnz
14495e3003ed   nginx:stable                        "/docker-entrypoint..." 9 minutes ago  Up 9 minutes  80/tcp        wazuh_nginx.1.1nc79e98kfcedcubv30sczll

(root@osboxes)-[~]

```

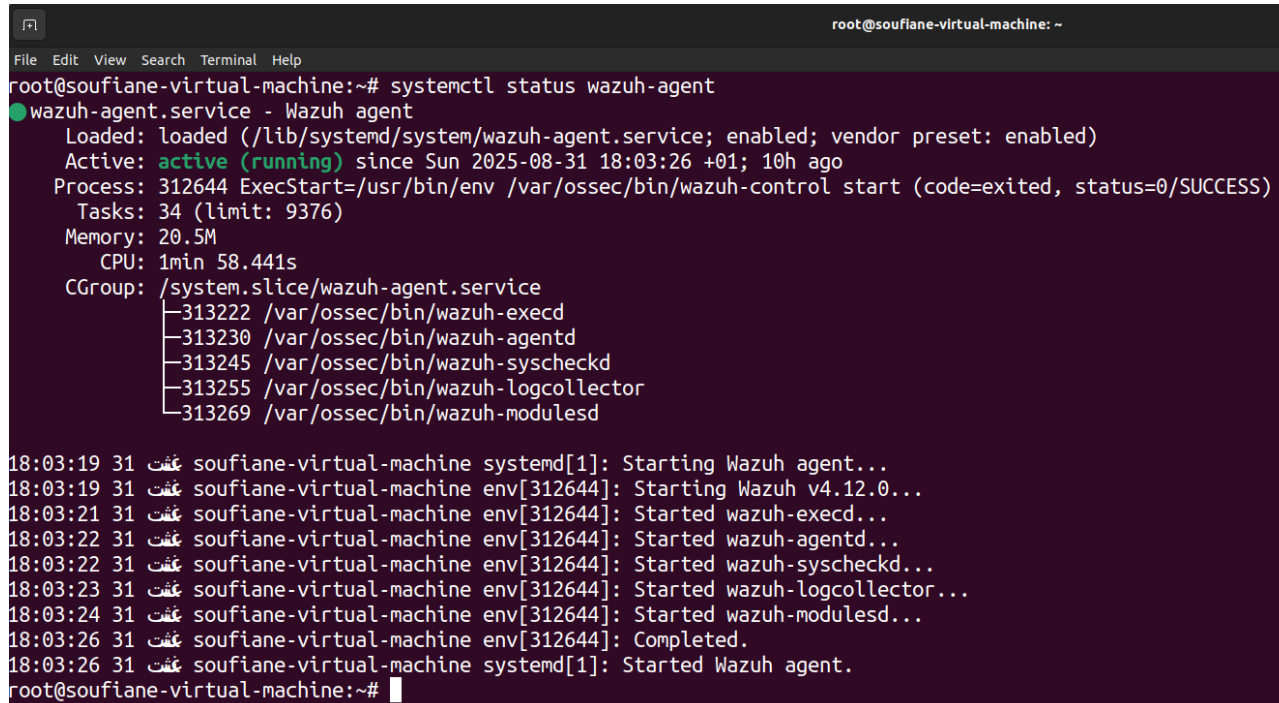
Part 2: Custom Threat Detection Rule

Introduction

The second part of this project focused on enhancing the security monitoring capabilities of the Wazuh stack by implementing a custom detection rule. This rule was specifically designed to identify suspicious SSH login patterns, a common vector for brute-force attacks and unauthorized access attempts. The objective was to create an automated alert system that detects a sequence of multiple failed login attempts followed by a successful login with a new user, providing immediate visibility into potential security incidents.

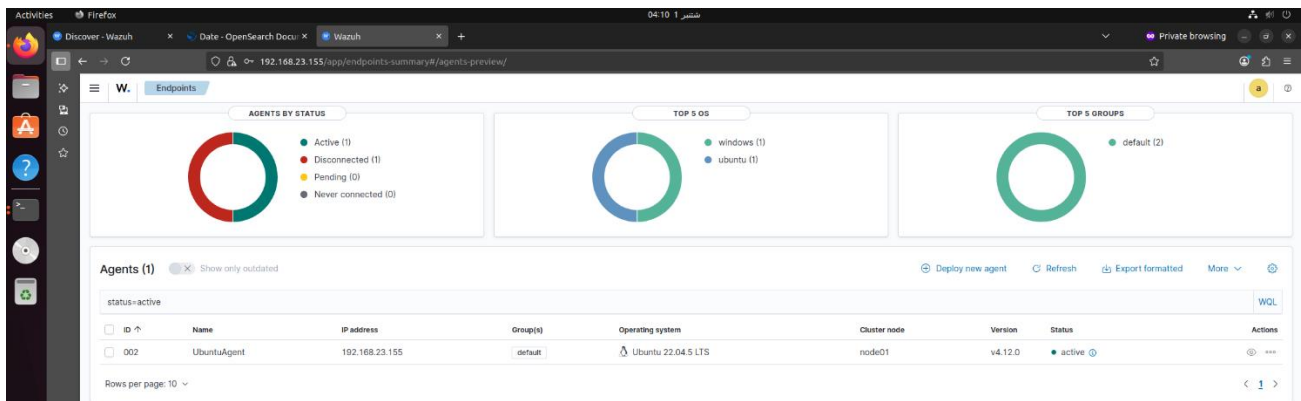
Wazuh Agent Installation

To monitor the target node, a Wazuh agent was successfully downloaded, installed, and activated on the Ubuntu machine. Once connected to the Wazuh server, the agent began collecting security logs and forwarding them for analysis and detection, serving as the data source for our custom rule.

A terminal window titled 'root@soufiane-virtual-machine: ~' showing the installation and startup of the Wazuh agent. The user runs 'systemctl status wazuh-agent', which shows the service is active and running. Below this, a series of logs show the systemd process starting the Wazuh agent and its various components (wazuh-execd, wazuh-agentd, wazuh-syscheckd, wazuh-logcollector, wazuh-modulesd) in sequence, all starting successfully.

```
root@soufiane-virtual-machine:~# systemctl status wazuh-agent
● wazuh-agent.service - Wazuh agent
   Loaded: loaded (/lib/systemd/system/wazuh-agent.service; enabled; vendor preset: enabled)
   Active: active (running) since Sun 2025-08-31 18:03:26 +01; 10h ago
     Process: 312644 ExecStart=/usr/bin/env /var/ossec/bin/wazuh-control start (code=exited, status=0/SUCCESS)
    Tasks: 34 (limit: 9376)
   Memory: 20.5M
      CPU: 1min 58.441s
   CGroup: /system.slice/wazuh-agent.service
           └─313222 /var/ossec/bin/wazuh-execd
             └─313230 /var/ossec/bin/wazuh-agentd
               └─313245 /var/ossec/bin/wazuh-syscheckd
                 └─313255 /var/ossec/bin/wazuh-logcollector
                   └─313269 /var/ossec/bin/wazuh-modulesd

18:03:19 31 ڭڭڭ soufiane-virtual-machine systemd[1]: Starting Wazuh agent...
18:03:19 31 ڭڭڭ soufiane-virtual-machine env[312644]: Starting Wazuh v4.12.0...
18:03:21 31 ڭڭڭ soufiane-virtual-machine env[312644]: Started wazuh-execd...
18:03:22 31 ڭڭڭ soufiane-virtual-machine env[312644]: Started wazuh-agentd...
18:03:22 31 ڭڭڭ soufiane-virtual-machine env[312644]: Started wazuh-syscheckd...
18:03:23 31 ڭڭڭ soufiane-virtual-machine env[312644]: Started wazuh-logcollector...
18:03:24 31 ڭڭڭ soufiane-virtual-machine env[312644]: Started wazuh-modulesd...
18:03:26 31 ڭڭڭ soufiane-virtual-machine env[312644]: Completed.
18:03:26 31 ڭڭڭ soufiane-virtual-machine systemd[1]: Started Wazuh agent.
root@soufiane-virtual-machine:~#
```

Custom Rule Implementation

To create the custom rule, we accessed the Wazuh Manager container's shell and navigated to the rules directory at `/var/ossec/rulesets/rules`. Within this location, a new rule was created to identify suspicious SSH login activity. The logic of the rule is specifically designed to detect a sequence of five failed SSH login attempts from the same IP address. Following these failures, if a successful login is registered from the same IP and with the same user, a "suspicious SSH login" alert is generated. This custom rule directly addresses the threat detection requirements of the challenge, providing targeted and effective security monitoring.

```

root@soufiane-virtual-machine: ~/wazuh-docker/single-node
File Edit View Search Terminal Help
0165-vpopmail_rules.xml      0335-unbound_rules.xml      0505-vuls_rules.xml          0695-f5_bigip_rules.xml
0170-ftpdp_rules.xml         0340-puppet_rules.xml       0510-ciscat_rules.xml        0700-paloalto_rules.xml
0175-proftpd_rules.xml      0345-netscaler_rules.xml    0515-exim_rules.xml          0705-sophos_fw_rules.xml
bash-5.2# cd /var/ossec/ruleset/rules/
bash-5.2# cat 0999-local_ssh_rules.xml
<group name="sshd_custom">

  <!-- Failed SSH login -->
  <rule id="4795" level="5">
    <match>Failed password for</match>
    <description>Custom SSH failed login attempt detected</description>
    <group>sshd_custom, ssh, authentication_failed</group>
  </rule>

  <!-- Successful SSH login -->
  <rule id="5715" level="3">
    <match>Accepted password for</match>
    <description>Custom SSH successful login detected</description>
    <group>sshd_custom, ssh, authentication_success</group>
  </rule>

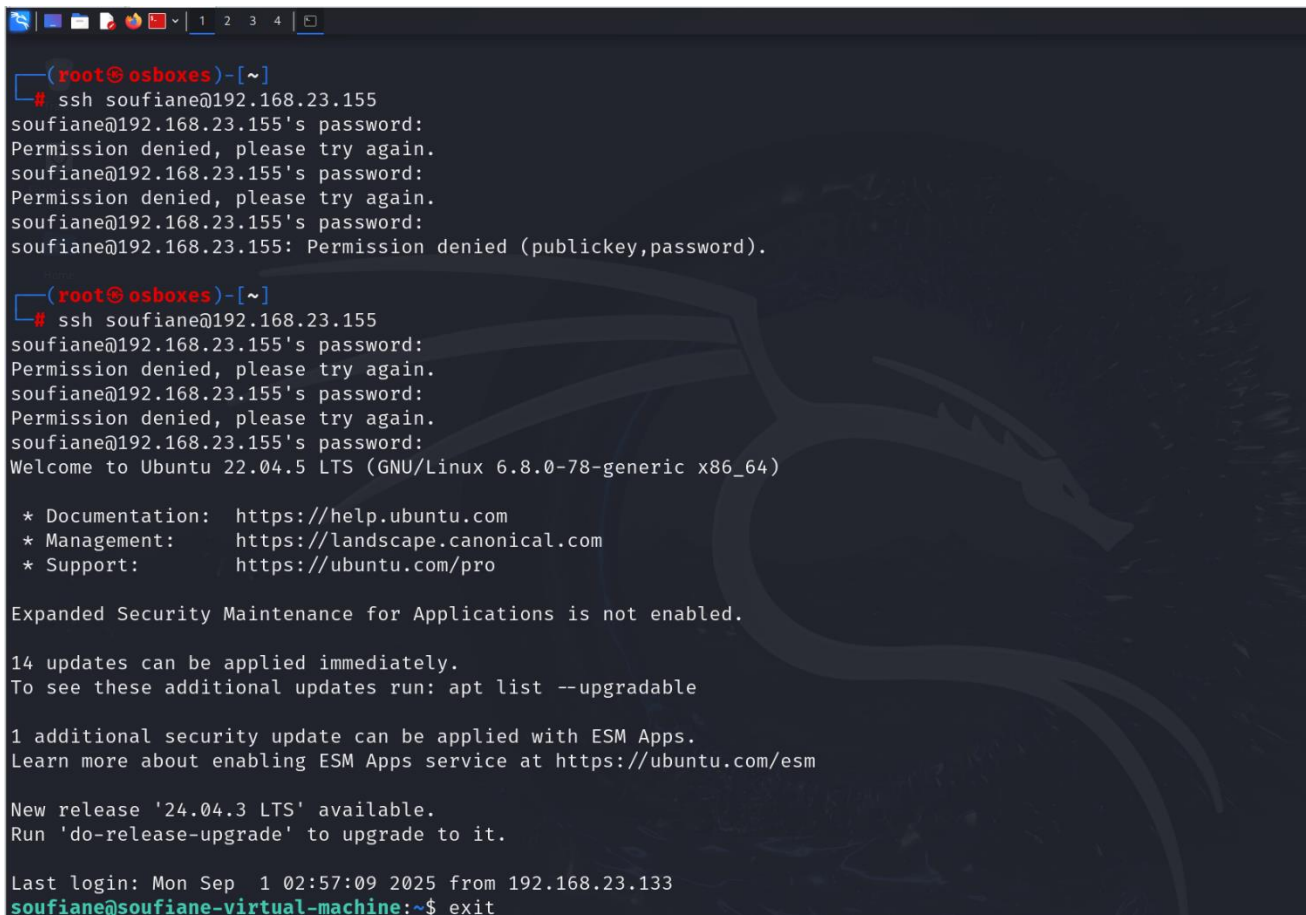
  <!-- Multiple failed attempts -->
  <rule id="4956" level="10" frequency="5" timeframe="300">
    <if_matched_sid>4795</if_matched_sid>
    <same_source_ip/>
    <same_user/>
    <description>Multiple SSH failed attempts detected (staging)</description>
    <group>ssh_failed_staging</group>
  </rule>

  <!-- Suspicious SSH login pattern -->
  <rule id="4957" level="15">
    <match>Accepted password for</match>
    <description>Suspicious SSH login pattern: multiple failed attempts followed by a successful login</description>
    <group>ssh_suspicious, ssh, correlation</group>
    <mitre>
      <id>T1110</id>
      <id>T1078</id>
    </mitre>
  </rule>

```

Alert Triggering

Following the implementation of the custom rule, a simulation was performed from a Kali Linux machine. After five unsuccessful SSH login attempts, the sixth attempt, with the correct password, succeeded. As designed, this sequence of events immediately triggered an alert. Screenshots of the generated alerts, visible in the Wazuh dashboard, confirm that our rule successfully detected the suspicious login pattern, thereby validating its proper functioning.

A terminal window screenshot showing a sequence of SSH login attempts from a Kali Linux machine (root@osboxes) to a virtual machine (soufiane@192.168.23.155). The first five attempts fail with 'Permission denied' messages. The sixth attempt succeeds, displaying the Ubuntu 22.04.5 LTS login banner, system information, and update notifications. The user then enters 'exit' to end the session.

```
(root@osboxes)-[~]
# ssh soufiane@192.168.23.155
soufiane@192.168.23.155's password:
Permission denied, please try again.
soufiane@192.168.23.155's password:
Permission denied, please try again.
soufiane@192.168.23.155's password:
soufiane@192.168.23.155: Permission denied (publickey,password).

(root@osboxes)-[~]
# ssh soufiane@192.168.23.155
soufiane@192.168.23.155's password:
Permission denied, please try again.
soufiane@192.168.23.155's password:
Permission denied, please try again.
soufiane@192.168.23.155's password:
Welcome to Ubuntu 22.04.5 LTS (GNU/Linux 6.8.0-78-generic x86_64)

 * Documentation:  https://help.ubuntu.com
 * Management:    https://landscape.canonical.com
 * Support:       https://ubuntu.com/pro

Expanded Security Maintenance for Applications is not enabled.

14 updates can be applied immediately.
To see these additional updates run: apt list --upgradable

1 additional security update can be applied with ESM Apps.
Learn more about enabling ESM Apps service at https://ubuntu.com/esm

New release '24.04.3 LTS' available.
Run 'do-release-upgrade' to upgrade to it.

Last login: Mon Sep  1 02:57:09 2025 from 192.168.23.133
soufiane@soufiane-virtual-machine:~$ exit
```

